Individual Artist Fellowships & Awards
Work Sample Preparation Guide

This guide is intended only to assist applicants with the compatibility of their existing work sample files. Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation (MAAF) is not able to assist with the recording or editing of the work sample content.

It is recommended that you prepare and upload your work samples early in the application process. Traffic to the eGRANT site generally increases closer to application deadlines and lag time for uploads may cause upload errors. Please upload one file at a time, saving between uploads, and remember that uploads may take several minutes depending on connection speed.

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GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

What are the technical requirements for work sample files?

Although all work samples submitted via http://MAAFArtist.egrant.net must meet certain basic criteria, *it is very important that applicants check the current program guidelines for the state to which they are applying to ensure they are following the correct work sample technical requirements.*

Here are the basic requirements for each work sample type:

Audio Samples:

- There is a size limit of 20MB per audio file
- Audio files may be uploaded in .MP3 format ONLY

Image Samples:

- File Format: .JPG ONLY
- Recommended Dimensions: 1240 pixels x 1240 pixels
- Recommended File Size: 2.0 MB maximum for each image

Text Samples:

- .PDF format ONLY
- All pages must be submitted as a single .PDF document

Video Samples:

- There is a size limit of 250MB per video file
- Video files may be uploaded in .MP4 or .MOV format

Metadata (Audio and Video Files):

Metadata stored in audio and video files should not contain any information about the artist or production details that might reveal the identity of the applicant.

How will the work sample quality impact the review of my application?

It is always recommended that applicants submit the best work sample quality possible within the required size and time limitations.

All panelists and jurors are provided with a copy of the program guidelines and are familiar with the technical requirements for the work samples they are reviewing. Accordingly, they are aware that applicants may need to reduce the size of the files they are submitting. In most cases, minimal loss of image/video/audio quality due to resizing or compression will have no impact on review since the panelists are asked to focus on the work itself rather than the quality of the documentation. However, work samples should always be easy for the panelists to view, hear, and decipher. If panelists are not able to fully determine the artistic excellence of the work sample due to extremely poor quality recordings or images, this may lower the application's overall score during the review process.

Visual artists should be sure that the images of their work are focused.   They should also consider lighting and how the image is framed; cutting off the edge of the work in the image, for example, may prevent the panelists from getting a sense of the work's texture or understanding how the piece is finished.

Artists working in film or video who are concerned about diminished picture quality due to compression may indicate how the work is intended to be seen or the equipment used in the Technical Information section of the application, when available.

How do I determine the file type of my work sample?

File type can be determined by the file name extension, or the letters following the period at the end of the file name. Click here for a list of common file types and their extensions.

My work sample is not the correct file type. How do I convert the file?

There are a number of free, simple to use conversion websites available online. One such site is http://www.convertfiles.com/, which can be used for audio, text, and video files.

1) Prepare your work sample and save the file.
2) Open your web browser and go to http://www.convertfiles.com/.
3) Click "Browse…" next to the "Choose a local file" option and locate the file on your computer.
4) Open the file so that the file path is shown in the "Choose a local file" field
5) The "Input format" should match the uploaded file type
6) Select the file type you would like to convert to in "Output format"
7) Hit "Convert." The conversion may take several minutes.

Other options for online file conversion programs include:
http://www.mediaconverter.org/
http://www.youconvertit.com/ConvertFiles.aspx

How do I determine the size of my file?

Windows: To check the size of an individual file, browse to the location where the file is saved. Right click the file then select "Properties." Information about the file will be displayed here, including the file size.

Mac: Browse to the location where the file is saved. Click "Control" + your file, then select "Get Info." A window will pop up displaying the file properties.

How should I label my files?

The eGRANT system has the following requirements for the names of all files uploaded in the online application:

- Do not use punctuation marks or any other non-alphanumeric characters in the file name (",&,%, #, ?, etc.) The exceptions are dashes and underscores, which are acceptable.
- Do not include any accents or non-Latin letters (e.g. è, Ø, Þ, ü, ñ, etc.)
- Capital letters and spaces are acceptable
- Applicants should be aware that file names longer than 32 characters, not including the file extension, will be automatically truncated by the application software

Is there a template I should use when naming my files?

Artists should NOT include their name, initials, or any other identifying information in the file name. Aside from this requirement, however, there is not a specific template or format that applicants need to follow. All work sample files uploaded into the applications are digitally linked to the applicant's account so there is no need to include the artist's name or ID number to identify the artist.

Applicants in all states should avoid using the incompatible characters mentioned above.

My file name is too long or contains an incompatible character. How do I rename a file?

Windows: Browse to the location where the file is saved. Right click the file then select "Rename." Click into the file name field to rename the file.

Mac: Browse to the location where the file is saved. Click "Control" + your file, then select "Get Info." Expand the "Name & Extension" section and click in the name field to rename the file.

What is the difference between the title and the file name?

The title is the information you type directly into the online application form whereas the file name is how the work sample you upload into the application is labeled. File names will always have an extension at the end (e.g. .jpg, .pdf, .mp3, .mp4). All information provided above pertains to how you should name your files. These character restrictions *do not* apply for the title of the work provided in the online application.

IMAGE FILES & RESIZING

How will the application software alter my images?

The eGRANT software will proportionally resize any image larger than the standard dimensions of 1240 pixels in the longest dimension to ensure that all images will display properly for the jurors. If the image is exactly 1240 pixels in the longest dimension or smaller, no resizing will occur. *Image source: National Gallery of Art*
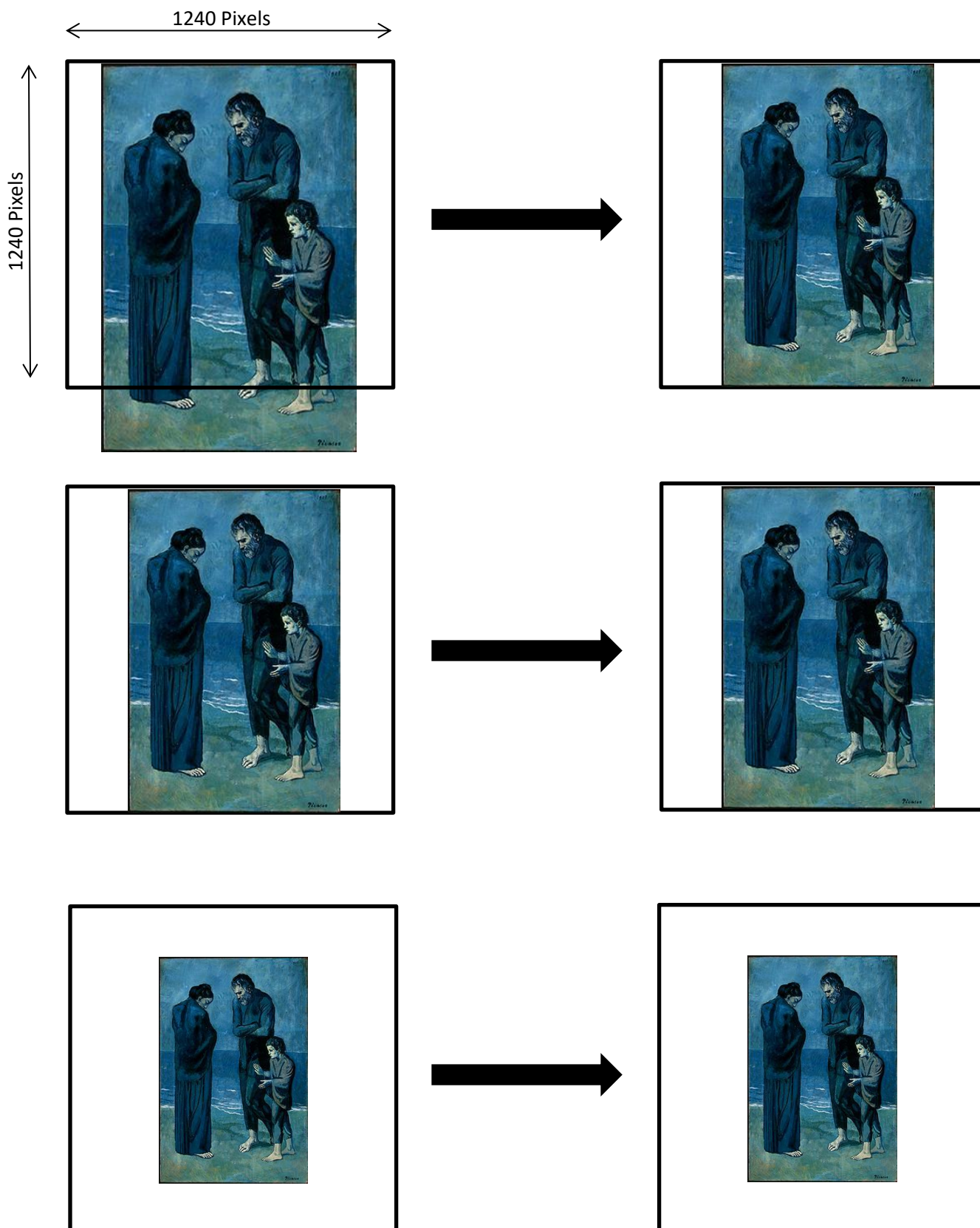
1240 Pixels

1240 Pixels

Why do you recommend that applicants resize their own photos prior to uploading them into the application?

Although the application software will adjust the size of uploaded images to ensure that they are sized properly for the review software used by the jurors, resizing the images themselves gives applicants greater control over the final appearance and quality of the files they are submitting. Applicants should note that the automated resizing process may reduce the image quality or distort the image, particularly if the submitted image is significantly larger than the recommended pixel dimensions.

My image is long/tall. Will this be a problem?

Possibly, depending on the dimensions. It is important to keep in mind that the image will fit within a square frame when it is viewed by the panelists. An image which is originally 100 x 10,000 pixels, for example, would be extremely condensed in a frame of 1240x1240 pixels, and impossible for the panelists to view clearly.
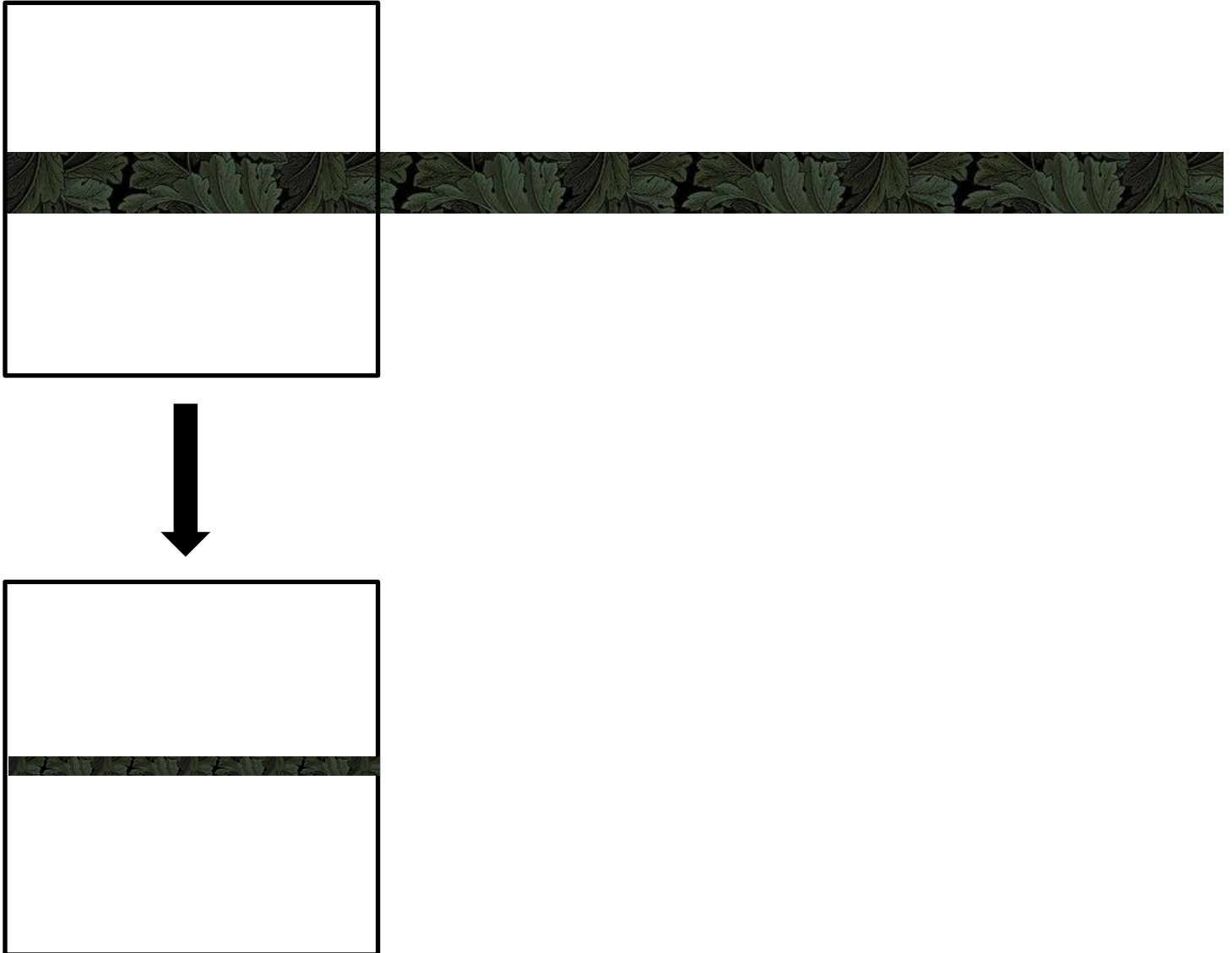
My image files are too large. How do I reduce the pixel and/or file size?
There are a number of free, simple to use photo editing websites available online if you do not have photo editing software on your computer.

The following websites are free and do not require software download:
http://www.picresize.com/
http://www.photoshop.com/tools?wf=editor

I'm not sure how to use the online resizing tools you recommend. Is assistance available?
A step-by-step guide developed by MAAF for using the www.picresize.com website is available on request. Please email kimberly@midatlanticarts.org to request a copy.

Is it a problem if my images are smaller than 1240 pixels in the longest dimension?
Potentially. Any image smaller than 1,000 pixels in the longest dimension may be difficult to view by the panelists because of its small size so it benefits the applicant to submit an image that is as close as possible to the recommended pixel dimensions.

Please note that you should only reduce the size of a file. Increasing the pixels and making the image larger will result in a pixelated image. If the image is less than 1,000 pixels in the longest dimension you may want to consider retaking the photo or choosing a different image/work sample.

What DPI should I use?
There is no DPI requirement. DPI (dots per inch) or PPI (pixels per inch) is relevant for printing/scanning quality standards but, since the submitted work sample files will only be viewed by the jurors in digital format, applicants only need to adjust the pixel dimensions of their images.

Do I need to put a mat behind my images?
No, this is not required. Images do not need to be square.

I notice that the guidelines say I can't have a signature in the image but I sign all my works. What should I do?
Because complete anonymity is a cornerstone of the Individual Artist programs, applicants will be required to remove or cover the signatures in their work. Below are some suggested options for signature removal:

- Use Photoshop or Paint software to obscure the signature digitally. You may choose to blend the signature into the work or simply block it out. As long as it is not possible to identify the artist, either option is acceptable.
- Manually cover the signature when photographing the work.
- Crop the signature out of the photo, although this is the least preferred method as it may compromise the composition and presentation of the work.

Can Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation help me remove the signatures?
Unfortunately, MAAF staff are unable to assist with any editing that can impact the final appearance of the work sample.

How can I make sure my images will look correct for the panelists?
Applicants uploading images should be sure to preview each image before submitting the application.

After selecting your image file in the upload field, save the application. Click the thumbnail of the uploaded image to preview the image. In the example below, we've uploaded the Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation logo:
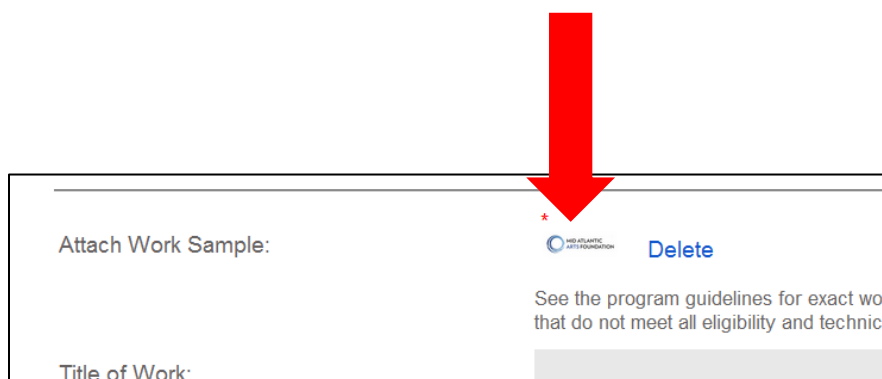
A new page or tab will open with the preview:
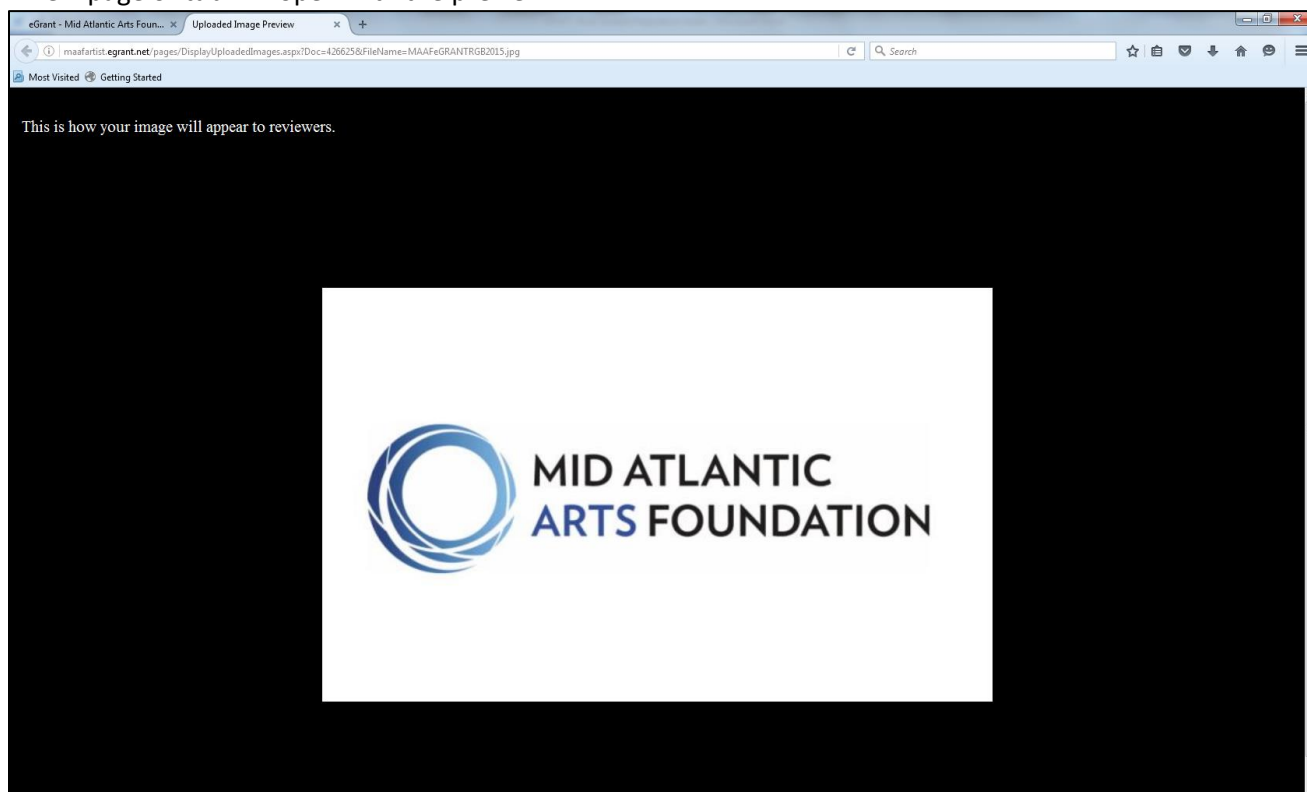
Something's not right! My uploaded images are distorted or look strange when I preview them. What should I do?
If something looks off, please contact us for assistance before submitting your application. Please email Kimberly@midatlanticarts.org and include information about which Browser you are using (Internet Explorer, Safari, Chrome, etc.) and if you are working with Mac or Windows operating software.

What is a composite image?

A composite image is when multiple images are combined into a single image file, generally to show multiple perspectives or details of a single work.

The images below represent ineligible composite images. In both examples, a detail shot of the same work has been added to the original image file *(Image Source: Rodin Museum)*:
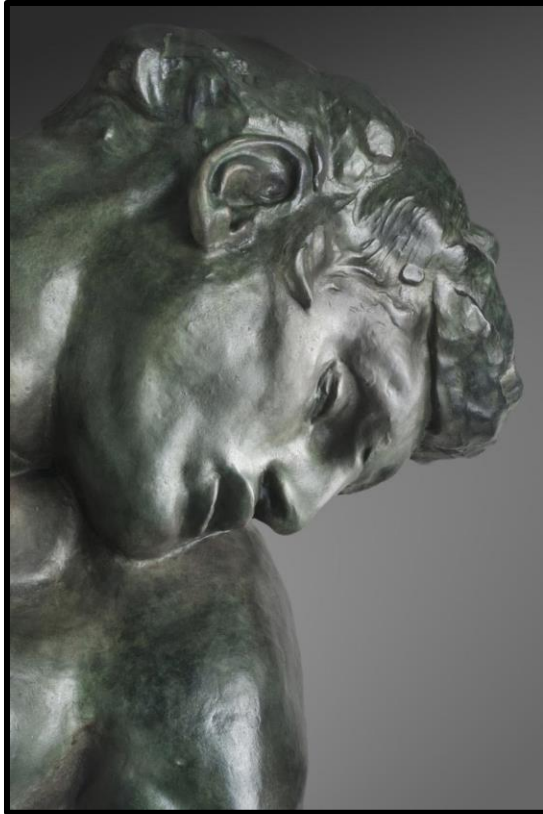
These images should be submitted as separate uploads in the online application as follows:
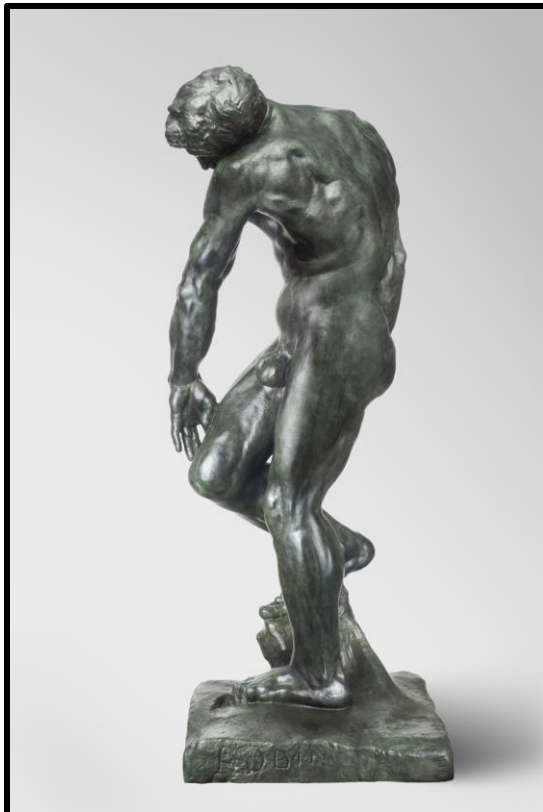
Primary Image

Detail Shot

Primary Image

Detail Shot

If a single work is composed of multiple pieces, is it considered a composite image?

No, if all parts of a single work – a diptych, for example – are captured in one photograph they are not considered composite shots. Three examples of acceptable work are included below. Each image shows all components of a single work or installation that are meant to be viewed as one piece.
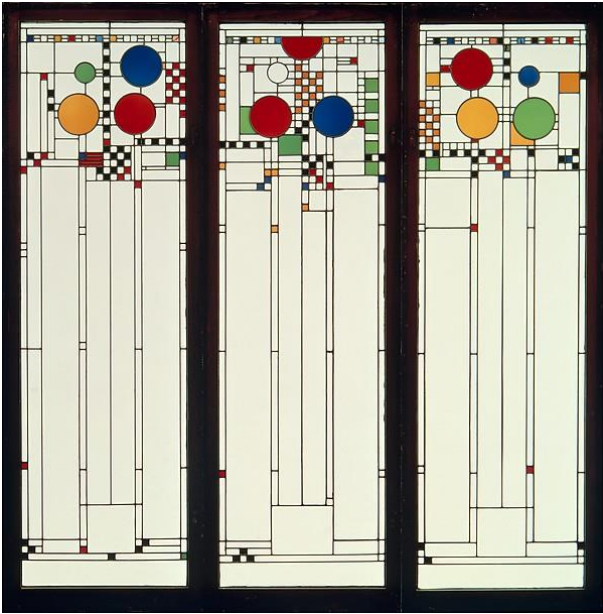
Source: Metropolitan Museum of Art

Source: Detroit Institute of Arts

Source: Museum of Modern Art

***What is metadata and how can I see if my files contain identifying information?***

Metadata is information about a file that is stored within the file itself. This can include technical information about the file such as the file type, size, and length. However, information about the artist which may reveal the identity of the applicant can also be stored as metadata. This can include anything from the name of the artist to information about the directors, genres, a playlist or album to which the file belongs, etc. Some media players will search for and display this metadata when playing back a file which endangers the anonymity of the application during the review process.

It is likely that all relevant metadata will be displayed in the file properties. To see if your file contains identifying information, please follow these instructions:

> **Windows:** Browse to the location where the file is saved. Right click the file then select "Properties." Information about the file will be displayed here.

> **Mac:** Browse to the location where the file is saved. Click "Control" + your file, then select "Get Info." A window will pop up displaying the file properties.

Review this information carefully. Do not include any details about the work sample that isn't provided in the online application. Be sure to remove any production details.
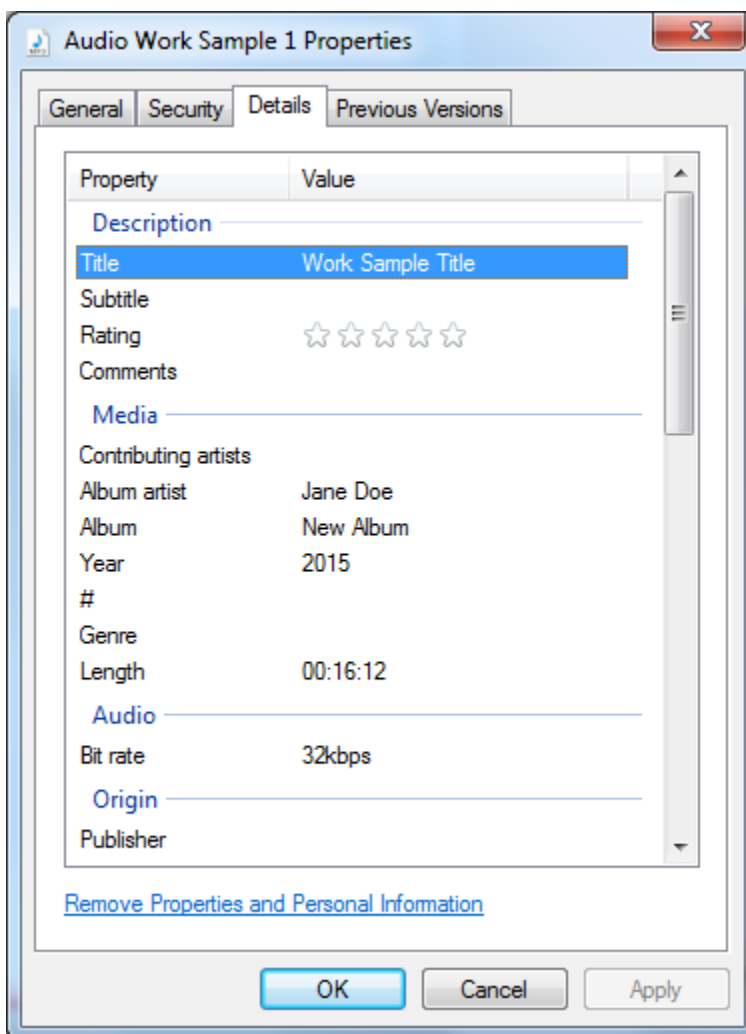
*In this example, you can see that identifying information, including
the artist and album name, is embedded as metadata.*

My audio or video file contains metadata that may reveal my identity. How do I remove it?

Both Windows and Mac users can delete metadata by clicking on each display property field and manually removing the information in file properties. Alternatively, Windows users can also delete metadata by clicking "Remove Properties and Personal Information."
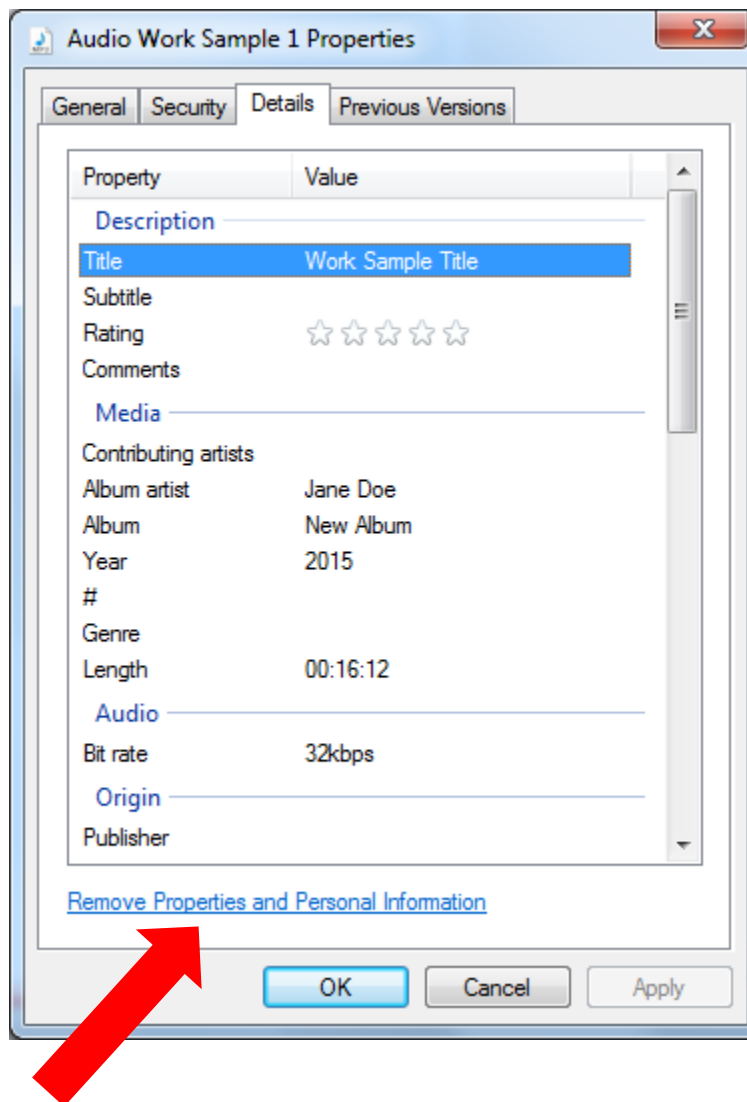
Please note: Mac users may need to access the properties through iTunes to remove ID3 tags from audio work sample files.

My file is too big. Can MAAF help me compress or reduce the size of my file?

Unfortunately, MAAF staff are unable to assist with editing or compressing audio and video work samples as there are a number of different variables that can impact the final presentation quality of the work sample.

PDF FILES

How do I convert a file to PDF?

Most word processing programs will have a "Save as" function which allows users to convert their documents directly to PDF. Open the document you would like to convert, click "Save as" then select PDF as the "Save as Type" below the file name.

If your word processing program doesn't have this function and you don't wish to download Adobe Acrobat, the following websites are free and do not require software download:
https://www.freepdfconvert.com/
https://online2pdf.com/ (Allows users to combine multiple documents into one PDF file)